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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR DRL, NEA/RA AND NEA/ARPI

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SUBJECT: DECISION ON UAE'S FIRST HUMAN RIGHTS NGO IMMINENT

1. (SBU) The UAE Government is apparently close to announcing that it will allow a domestic human rights organization to operate for the first time. On February 6, the English-daily 'Gulf News' reported that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs had approved the first human rights organization in the UAE, but the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, Ali bin Abdullah al-Kaabi, told the Ambassador that the press announcement was premature, and that the application was still under review by the ministry.

2. (SBU) The head of the organization's founding committee, Mohamed Fahd al-Dehim, told PolOff that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs had informed him that his organization, the UAE Commission for Human Rights, would indeed be approved within the next several days, and that the provisional Board of Governors had already begun to draft the charter of the organization. He added that the basis for the draft charter will primarily be the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with the European and American Conventions on Human Rights. The stated goal of the organization will be to raise awareness of human rights as provided in the UAE Constitution and the UN Convention on Human Rights, and to work within existing legal channels to increase human rights within the country and make federal laws compatible with the international human rights conventions.

3. (SBU) Post will follow up septel with a more thorough analysis of the UAEG's apparently imminent decision to allow a human rights NGO to operate, as well as reactions to the announcement from human rights activists, some of whom are hopeful that their long-pending NGO applications will also be approved.

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